

TRUSTEEtips

INFORMATION AND EVENTS FOR TODAY'S SC PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES

JANUARY 2005

DID YOU KNOW... Open Meeting Law

The library board's work is done in board meetings and committee meetings. What takes place in board meetings can make the difference between an effective or an ineffective board.

Open Meeting Law

Any meeting of a public library board in South Carolina is subject to the Open Meeting Law. Public libraries, like other tax-supported agencies, must operate in the best interest of the public with all meetings held in public. The Open Meeting Law is designed to protect the public from secret dealings by public agency boards. Public notice of the date, time and place of regular meetings, or rescheduled or reconvened meetings, must be posted at least 24 hours before the meeting. Very simply, **this statute is protection against abuse of public power.**

It is sometimes difficult for board members to conduct a meeting and speak candidly with the public or media representatives watching and listening. Board members often feel they must be overly responsive to those listening, and the result can be deliberation that seems aimed more at the audience than at the rest of the board team—speeches rather than deliberations. Some board members may be so intimidated by an audience that they don't speak at all and all sides of the issues are not considered.

However, attempting to circumvent the Open Meeting Law is dangerous and unnecessary. The board can function well in the open and within the law.

Understand that your board meeting is a meeting conducted in public, not a public meeting. In other words, the public, and possibly media representatives, are there to watch the board work, not to participate in the board meeting.

For more information about the Open Meeting law and other meeting skills go to Chapter 5: Board Meetings (starts on pages 23) of your **Pocket Reference Manual for Public Library Trustees** published by the SC State Library 1999.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

March 2, 2005

Library Legislative Day – Adam's Mark Hotel sponsored by Association of Public Library Administrators (APLA)

May 21, 2005

Trustee 101 for newly appointed Trustees at the Greenville County Library, Greenville, SC. Speaker is Pat Wagner from Pattern Research Co.

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Staff Development Day in Beaufort County Library included Training for Library and Friends Board

The Beaufort County Library at their October 11, 2004 Staff Development Day added a new track designed specifically for the county library board and friends boards. Sessions included information about board/library responsibilities, advocacies, marketing and programming for Friends Groups. The group gave high marks for the session and wants it to be continued at future staff development days. The Boards also attended lunch with all staff and was able to meet and discuss issues of interest in an informal setting. For more information about how to include trustee education sessions at your staff development day, contact Deborah Hotchkiss at deborah@leo.scsl.state.sc.us or 803-734-8646.

Orientation Schedule for New Public Library Trustees

Pat Wagner of Pattern Research will again be conducting a three hour orientation for newly appointed trustees on **Saturday, May 21, 2005** from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Greenville County Public Library, 25 Heritage Green Place, Greenville, SC 29601.

Highlights include:

- Roles and responsibilities of a library trustee including your job description, your relationship to the library director and staff and how to be an advocate for the public library
- Planning for the Library's future
- Policy and liability issues

There is no registration fee, but we request that you register in advance so that we will know how many people will attend. Please contact Deborah Hotchkiss, Library Development Consultant at deborah@leo.scsl.state.sc.us or by phone 803-734-8646 by May 11, 2005.

New SC Public Library Trustees

Appointed since July 1, 2004

Chester County Library

Linda Wylie, Chester
Dr. Gerald Hensley, Richburg

Dillon County Library

William Lee, Hamer
Emma Leah Lucius, Dillon
Famon Whitfield, Dillon

Lee County Library

Joy Edgerton, Bishopville

Oconee County Library

Carol Baumgarner, West Union

Orangeburg County Library

Doris Johnson, Orangeburg

Pickens County Library

Patsy Smith, Sunset

Saluda County Library

Sandra Fulmer, Saluda
Barbara Lake, Saluda
Mary Andrews, Saluda
Brenda Mitchell, Saluda
Vermell Best, Ward

Sumter County Library

Harrison Brown, Sumter

LEARN MORE AT
statelibrary.sc.gov/lib/trustees.html

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Margaret J. Bundy
Deborah Hyler
Marie Horne
James Campbell
Maria B. Macaulay
Audrey "Betsy" Crawford

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